STATEMENT

by

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Head of the delegation of Ukraine to the Conference on Disarmament

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Mr. President,

At the outset let me congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).
I am confident that your able Presidency would contribute to attaining the desired goal – the resumption of the substantive work.
In this regard I assure you of the strong support of my delegation.

Mr. President,

Ukraine firmly believes that the CD is an indispensible instrument of achieving ultimate disarmament and building the world free of nuclear weapons.
In this regard, we are seriously concerned about more than 13 years of stalemate, which puts the credibility and legitimacy of this unique multilateral forum at risk.

We highly appreciate efforts, made by national delegations, the UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon and the CD Secretary-General Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in order to find the acceptable way of revitalizing the CD and approving the Programme of Work (PoW) for 2012.

During previous months we carefully followed and supported the initiatives of the Ecuadorian and Egyptian Presidencies aimed at hammering out compromises and we highly appreciate their efforts to facilitate progress towards the resumption of the substantive work of this forum. Both draft proposals put before the CD incorporated results of extensive consultations and though not being perfect in certain dimensions they surely deserved our support for the sake of long-awaited and urgently needed compromise.

We regret the sad fact that no consensus had been found and support the proposal of continuing consultations formal and informal with the objective not to lose tempo in efforts generated so far.

Our primary goal is an adoption and implementation in 2012 of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work in line with requests expressed by the 66 session of the UN General Assembly.

We believe that the document CD/1864 (2009) could still constitute a basis for the relevant draft PoW. Though recent developments indicate that this document is unlikely to achieve needed consensus, its major components should be taken into account while drafting a new PoW.

We also think that the proposals, delivered by the Secretary General of the CD Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on improvement of the functioning of the Conference and charting a way out of the current impasse, should receive our careful consideration. Operational revitalization of the CD in view of my delegation is our next priority.

Therefore the issues of modernizing of the CD’s agenda and raising the procedural efficiency of the Conference (review of the system of Presidency’s rotation and extension of their terms; continuity of the previously adopted PoW) should be incorporated in our discussions and possible PoW.
Mr. President,

Allow me to address several issues of the CD’s agenda that Ukraine considers to be of particular importance.

The ultimate goal of international community is clear – complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament as the only guarantee of protecting humanity from the deadly consequences of possible use of nuclear weapons.

One of the important aspects of international nuclear non-proliferation efforts is securing nuclear materials from potential dangerous misuse.

During the Washington Nuclear Security Summit in 2010 Ukraine announced a decision to get rid of all existing stocks of highly enriched uranium (HEU).

This decision was affirmed by a number of policy documents, including the Joint statement by the Presidents of Ukraine and the United States and by the bilateral Intergovernmental Memorandum on cooperation on nuclear safety dated September 26, 2011.

I am pleased to inform that on March 22, 2012 our country have not only secured all vulnerable nuclear materials, but fully implemented the commitment to renounce the use of the HEU in civil nuclear research facilities and to get rid of all the HEU stocks (220 kg) by the time of the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, taking place these days.

Thus Ukraine has set another good example of a firm political will and confirmed its adherence to all-out strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

Another crucial issue attracting wide attention of international community and being a priority for Ukraine in the CD is the granting of the non-nuclear-weapon states with the effective security assurances.

Although this approach has not yet materialized in formal mandate proposal, the issue of the negative security assurances (NSAs) is a priority of the CD’s agenda and is widely supported by the vast majority of members. The numerous international consultations, including the discussions in the framework of the CD, have repeatedly acknowledged an urgent need to conclude the relevant binding instrument and demonstrated ripeness of this issue for negotiations.

NSAs would not only send strong message dissuading states from acquiring nuclear weapons but would be also highly instrumental for strengthening confidence, building a new quality of regional and global security.

Elaboration of a draft legal international agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons will represent an achievable step towards fulfillment of the commitments undertaken pursuant to Article VI of the NPT and will strongly promote further non-proliferation agenda.

In this regard we appeal to all States, especially to the nuclear-weapon States, to continue intensive deliberations with a view of reaching an early agreement on an international instrument of a legally binding character on this matter.

Thank you for your attention.